

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 1593 without my signature as it would restrict California's ability to address vendor overcharging, at the expense of maximizing the number of women and children served. The federally funded Woman, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) provides critical food supplies and nutrition services to 1.3 million low-income pregnant women, mothers and their young children. WIC funding comes from a capped federal grant, therefore, any dollar lost due to fraudulent activities is a dollar not spent to buy food for low-income mothers and their children.

Assembly Bill 1593 limits the Department of Health Service's ability to impose penalties or sanctions when a vendor overcharges the program, purchases WIC coupons with cash or is disqualified from the Food Stamps Program. In accordance with federal law, the WIC Program already provides vendors written notification of initial violations and bases program sanctions on a pattern of practice, not on a single violation, unless the violation is very serious.

Assembly Bill 1593 would make California law inconsistent with federal law and compromise enforcement of regulations designed to maximize the number of low-income mothers and children served with available program funds.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger